EFL Teachers' Strategies in Motivating Low-Achieving Learners in Online Class

[1]Zulkhoir Siregar, [2]Johannes Ananto Prayogo, [3]Utari Praba Astuti

[1,2,3]English Language Teaching -Universitas Negeri Malang

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Author Correspondence:

Zulkhoir Siregar
English Language Teaching
Universitas Negeri Malang
Semarang St, Number 5, East Java, Indonesia
E-mail: regardsamosir@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to investigate EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners in online classes from the perspective of twenty-five English teachers and thirty low-achieving learners. The data were collected through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The result of the study revealed that there were some foremost motivational teaching strategies applied by EFL teachers to deal with low-achieving learners during online classes; monitoring students' activities, showing the importance of English, clarifying difficult topics, caring about students' learning progress, and explaining topics clearly and specifically.

Education stakeholders, including teachers and students, agree that 2020, 2021 and 2022 were the most exceptional years. The Covid-19 outbreak definitely impacted all areas of society such as the economy, politics, society, and education were no exception. All schools were closed due to the government's instruction to prevent the spread of infection cases. The recent data (February 07, 2022) by the Ministry of Health showed that there were 4,5 million people in Indonesia who got infected by the virus. The government focused on the immediate health and safety of the country. It, then, became a serious consideration for the government to not allow face-to-face learning activities. Due to the closure of physical school buildings, many teachers gave the best of themselves and struggled to provide the quality of teaching and learning process that students normally had received before the pandemic. Students' parents also struggled to adequately support them that learn from their own homes. The problems did not stop in this spot; other crucial problems such as lack of motivation and learning loss appeared after schools had online classes for several semesters or more.

Many researchers have attempted studies on the impact of online classes due to unfinished pandemics. Caroline (2020) found that teachers mostly reported that their students were three months behind where they would normally expect them to be in their curriculum target at the end of the school year. This was a terrible fact. It became worse when there was an extension of the closure of school buildings. In this situation, teachers tried to completely teach all materials obligated by the curriculum at their best, but the data, unfortunately, show that they only could cover 66 per cent of the usual curriculum taught during the 2019/2020 school year. It was definitely far from expectations in the beginning.

Generally, students only made little or no progress since they were forced to learn from home. In particular, 92% of the students across all levels lost at least one specific language ability such as expressing stories orally, reading comprehension, and writing sentences. It was totally a hard job for the teachers and policymakers to decide the next target if face-to-face learning activity was still not possible to re-open (Sarjapura, 2021). It was reported that high school students were not immune to learning disruption caused by the Covid-19 outbreak. Their parents reported that their children spent less time on learning activities than before the pandemic, as they had less frequent live contact with their teachers. The learning disruption in high school students was immediately seen in university admission. There was a significant difference in the results obtained by the candidates of university students before and after having online classes due to the closure of school buildings (Kwakye et al., 2021).

Basically, teachers could not deny that they faced students who were not successful in passing the minimum scores of English lessons. These students scored low in several or all assignments and tests. In addition to the lack of technical support, such as the unavailability of an internet connection to attend online classes, motivation from the environment—parents, teachers, or classmates, might have also contributed to this case of low scores. Motivation itself is considered one of the determining factors of success in learning a particular language (Cheng and Dörnyei, 2007). It essentially triggers the spirit, direction, and persistence of an individual concerning creating activation and intention during the language learning process. Without having sufficient motivation, even people with the most peculiar skills might not achieve long-term goals. High motivation can make up for

significant inadequacy both in one's language competence and learning conditions (Ekiz and Kumeltov, 2016). Eventually, good learning outcomes will be well-achieved since both teachers and students have strong motivation.

Researchers found that there were many factors influencing foreign language learners' achievement such as students' motivation, strategies, metacognition, and learning aptitude. Student motivation is consistently viewed as a critical determinant of students' foreign language learning and achievement. Motivation is diverse, complex, and undergoes up and down. In some cases, the students can do or learn some materials for hours with a very great focus while on other days all they may do is just sit and learn nothing. This shows that students may have less or no motivation to learn. It can be seen, a lack of motivation is a frequent problem experienced by language learners, especially learning a foreign language during the Covid-19 outbreak (Kun li, 2017). To some extent, students might have shared the feeling that learning English is a more effort-demanding task during the Covid-19 pandemic. This feeling accords with reality showing that some of the students passed the minimum score and some others did not.

Recently, researchers have shown an increasing interest in studying motivation. Ekiz and Kumeltov (2016), for instance, have revealed the factors affecting students' motivation in English language education. In their study, parental, environmental, and teacher attitude-related factors were examined. By giving a survey consisting of several statements to 40 students majoring in English language teaching, the result showed that most students were motivated when their parents supported and encouraged them to learn English. Regarding the environmental factors, most students seemed to be more motivated when they worked together with their friends. Moreover, the students were also motivated as teachers created realistic and clear information related to why they were involved in an activity and its goal in the classroom.

In line with this study, Kassing's study (2011) revealed that there was a significant correlation between the language teacher's motivational teaching practices and the increased level of the learners' motivated behaviours in learning English as a foreign language. It indicated that teachers played a significant role in increasing students' motivation in learning. Reza and Hussein (2013) interviewed 40 students in a study aiming to let the teachers know some best ways to surge up EFL students' motivation in class. The result of this study revealed that letting the students know the course syllabi and the assessment, giving rewards and positive reinforcement, and giving them a chance to group work and role play would considerably increase the student's motivation. These ways can be employed by teachers to surge their students' motivation. The application of the proposed ways to increase students' motivation demands the teacher's expertise in knowing how to behave in the class while applying them. Teacher's behaviour is a powerful motivational tool which can attract and involve the students in learning (Dörnyei 2001).

Regarding low-achieving learners, Kelly Anne (2003) states that low-achieving learners are children who do not fit into the curriculum pace that the majority of learners do. If repeated failure happens, it can damage their self-esteem. They then can be less motivated and even have little social interactions with other students because of this failure. At the same time, they need more drills and repetition. Moreover, Samer and Mohammad (2015) state that the causes of academic failure are such as lack of a clear plan, medical and psychological reasons, reasons related to the learner, parental and educational reasons, exam anxiety, and lack of motivation for success.

In the same way, Eno (2019) asserts that remedial materials by using a combination of activities can increase low-achieving learners' performances. For example, could be like dividing students into teamwork, stimulating learners' interest, exploiting learners' first language, and so on. Considering that low-achieving learners are generally not equipped with sufficient prerequisite knowledge, teachers need to simplify the materials to make them more easily understand the materials (Tsui and Ying, 2020). Depicted various studies above indicate that previous researchers have not dealt with the EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners in online classes, particularly in this ruining Covid-19 outbreak. The expected outcome of this study is to find out EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners during online classes. It attempts what activities EFL teachers actually can do to solve such kind of phenomenon.

METHOD

This research aims at discovering EFL teachers' strategies for motivating low-achieving learners in the context of online classes. Thus, the research is designed to find out the strategies used by EFL teachers to motivate learners having insufficient scores during online classes.

As this research is intended to diagnose what strategies are used by EFL teachers to motivate low-achieving learners in an online context, descriptive qualitative research particularly case study design was employed. Case study research design is seen as the most appropriate research method used in this study because the research aims at finding more insight into EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners during online classes with a small number of participants and particular events (Berg and Lune, 2017). Case study research is widely used for in-depth study on a limited number of cases that can draw observational data about EFL teachers and students and then represent a larger population of cases (Gerring, 2017).

This research was conducted in Indonesia, particularly by EFL teachers and students of *MAN Insan Cendekia*, also known as *MAN IC* standing for *Insan Cendekia* State Islamic Senior High Schools which is spread over 23 places in different provinces from Aceh to Papua. Due to the big number of populations, time limitations and distance, the researcher only got a chance to take twenty-five participants from eighteen schools. To make it clearer, the school spread is presented as follows:

Figure 1. Spread of Samples

In order to obtain supplementary data, the researcher then involved students to participate in this present study. In light of the purpose of this study is to investigate EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners in online classes, asking low-achieving learners' perceptions sounds too personal, sensitive, and could be offensive (Kumar; 2019: 303). The best technique for asking sensitive or threatening questions is distributing questionnaires to all students without informing them that the questions are special for low achievers. Finally, after distributing questionnaires, 254 students willingly participated in this study. Through the teacher's information, the researcher finally found 30 students categorized as low-achieving learners consisting of 21 males and 9 females. Furthermore, two kinds of instruments used in this study are questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were distributed to get the data for EFL teachers and students. Meanwhile, the interview was done to clarify EFL teachers' and students' choices in questionnaires.

Basically, in conducting survey research there are many possible techniques to obtain data from respondents such as through mail, telephone, internet, personal interview, and group administration. Considering the geographical background and distance limitation, the researcher collected data through an internet survey, particularly via *Whatsapp*, *google chat*, and *Google form*. EFL teachers and students were given some questionnaires relating to the teacher's profession of the way how teachers usually motivate low-achieving learners during online classes. For semi-structured interviews, the researcher recorded and utilized the *Zoom* meeting platform and custom calls, depending on teachers' and students' preferences and availability.

Data analysis is necessarily done to find out the distinctive statistical analysis about the most selected items or the most often strategy/ies applied by the EFL teachers among motivational teaching strategies. Before analyzing the data, the researcher made sure that all data needed were completely obtained from the respondents. The data from the questionnaires were then submitted to descriptive analysis statistics and counted by using the Microsoft Excel application.

Moreover, for the interview section, the researcher recorded the semi-structured interview by voice recorder and some others were recorded by Zoom platform. Once the researcher has done the interview, the researcher transcribed all of the recorded data into written text. After all of the data were transcribed, the researcher could finally try to find out the teachers' and students' preferences of certain and most often strategies applied during giving motivation to low-achieving learners in an online class period.

FINDINGS

In light of the purpose of this study, the researchers divide this section into two issues related to teachers' practices in motivating low-achieving learners in online classes, namely (1) EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners in online classes, and (2) students' perception towards EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners in an online class.

Teachers' Strategies

The first stage of finding out teachers' strategies regarding their practices in motivating their low-achieving learners during online classes was teachers' general motivation. It becomes the researcher's opening questions to engage teachers' attention. It was related to strategies that could be done in synchronous and asynchronous meetings. This section is broken down into two statements, and the result of this part is presented in the following table 1.

Table 1. Teachers' General Motivation

No	Statements	Always	Frequently	Seldom	Never
	Using the e-learning platform utilized in my school, I …				
1	showed students that English mastery would be useful for their future.	72%	28%	-	-
2	showed students that I care about their progress in learning English.	68%	32%	-	-

Based on table 1 above, it shows information that teachers had a different frequency of applying these strategies. The majority of the teachers perceived that they always motivated their students by showing them that English would be very useful for their future. While a small number of teachers claimed that they applied that strategy at a frequent level. In strategy number 2, motivating low-achieving learners by showing care towards their learning progress was also a positive frequency. The majority of teachers stated that they always showed to their students that they definitely cared about their student's learning progress. According to some teachers interviewed, they said:

> 'Well, I always said that English could change everything. I gave them an analogy like "a cup of coffee in small *warkop* costs around 5K, when it is sold in Black Canyon or Black coffee store, it then becomes 50K. So, the students then think "That is definitely true". "English can change something usual into a more elegant thing…' (T4)
> '… had such an evaluation every month. Why student A got problem. I also gave them additional time to improve their scores. I then could give them private teaching when they were available. Afternoon or night is accepted. We definitely served them with our all hearts during online classes. (T24)

The next section is regarding the teachers' strategies in motivating their low-achieving learners during class sessions or synchronous meetings which can be seen from the respondents' responses to statements number 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The responses obtained are various. The result of this part is presented in the following table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' Strategies During Class Sessions

No.	Statements	Always	Frequently	Seldom	Never
	During the synchronous meetings on the e-learning platform utilized in my school, I …				
1	started the class by exploring and making use of students' prior knowledge to introduce them with the new topic.	56%	44%	-	-
				8%	-
2	presented various auditory and visual teaching aids to facilitate my students'	36%	56%	-	-
3	understanding and practices.	60%	40%	4%	-
4	explained topics clearly and specifically.	76%	20%	-	-
5	clarified topics or ideas that my students find hard to understand.	76%	24%	4%	-
6	regularly monitored my students' activities.	56%	40%	16%	-
7	helped my students understand particular complex aspects of English.	32%	52%		
	provided rewards for active participation during online classroom activities in the form of gifts or additional scores.				

Based on table 2, it shows that the majority of teachers started the class by exploring and making use of student's prior knowledge to introduce them to the new topic. The majority of the respondents perceived that they always did such kind of brainstorming to connect and engage students' prior knowledge to the next material taught. Then, more than half of the teachers claimed that they frequently presented various auditory and visual teaching aids to their students. Furthermore, teachers mostly tended to explain topics clearly and specifically, clarify difficult materials, and regularly monitor their students' activities. There is only a small number of teachers who seldom clarify topics that their students find hard to understand. It also can be seen that teachers mostly liked helping students understand particular complex aspects of English. To enhance students' eagerness of studying, most of their teachers also did another alternative by providing rewards for active participation during online classroom activities in the form of gifts or additional scores. Some teachers' activities and responses were shown as follows:

> 'Well, I usually gave them quotes. My students then liked to remind me in every meeting by saying "Sir, give us quotes". I always correlated the quote to the upcoming material. The first was giving quotes, then some stories from the experts. Summarized it, then introduced the next material'. (T4)

'I gave them an additional score in online class. For every participation got one star, like kindergarten students. The stars obtained could improve their insufficient scores. If it was offline, I could do a lot of things …'. (T24)

In the next part, the researcher specifically tried to find out the teachers' considerable strategies in motivating low-achieving learners after class sessions. The researcher offered five questionnaires in this part. The result of these responses can be seen in more detailed in the following table 3.

Table 3. Teachers' Strategies After Class Session

No.	Statements	Always	Frequently	Seldom	Never
	After the synchronous meeting, I …				
1	kept my students' parents regularly informed about their children's progress through text or call.	8%	24%	60%	8%
2	asked for parent's assistance in completing take-home tasks.	4%	12%	48%	36%
3	gave my students enough time for additional practices.	20%	72%	8%	-
4	answered my students' questions after the class individually.	24%	60%	12%	4%
5	provided additional homework based on individual student's weaknesses.	12%	56%	28%	4%

From table 3, the researcher found that the majority of teachers barely informed or called students' parents. They rarely involved students' parents in handling students with low achievements. 36% of the teachers even stated that never asked for parents' assistance in completing take-home tasks. In addition to helping students with a specific treatment, the result shows that teachers frequently gave students enough time for additional practice at their homes at their own pace. They also frequently answered students' questions after class through personal messages. Furthermore, teachers tried to motivate their students in asynchronous activities by providing additional homework based on individual students' weaknesses. There was a greater number of teachers who claimed that they frequently set additional assignments for certain students so that they were expected to be able to improve their performance. According to some teachers interviewed, they said:

'I usually kept their homeroom teacher informed. We have regular evaluations. From homeroom teacher to "guru asuh", then "guru asuh" goes to students' parents informing their children's learning processes. (T19)
'If they did not understand they could text me personally. I then could explain more intensively there'. (T16)
'I announced in the Zoom meeting. "For the ones whose houses are near to my house and you want to improve your scores, you may come to my house around 5 pm'. (T24)

The researchers continued asking teachers' considerable strategies for motivating low-achieving learners that involve students' friends. These strategies could be done in synchronous and asynchronous activities. This part is broken down into three statements. The result of these responses can be specifically seen in the following table 4.

Table 4. Teachers' strategies that involve students' peers

No.	Statements	Always	Frequently	Seldom	Never
	In the peer context, I …				
1	Encouraged peer teaching while or after class.	8%	60%	32%	-
2	Regularly used small-group tasks where students can mix.	20%	68%	12%	-
3	Invited high-achiever students to share their English learning experiences.	12%	72%	13 %	-

According to the table, it can be seen that teachers mostly had positive perceptions in employing peer teaching. They tended to mix students into small groups so that students could collaborate and cooperate with their own friends. More than half of the respondents also frequently invited high-achiever students to teach or share their English learning experiences with their friends. Some interviewed teachers shared their experiences in grouping students:

'It depends. If the materials seem demanding high achievers I needed to set the group members'. (T16)
'Usually random. In the hope they could upgrade themselves. If there was one high achiever in a certain group, they always depended on him/her. And I didn't want to see that'. (T24)

Students' Perception

The first section of the questionnaire in particular elicits the perception of senior high school students towards teachers' general motivational teaching strategies applied in their online classes. It becomes the researcher's basic questions to lead students' attention. This section is broken down into two statements, and the result of this part is presented in the following table 5.

Table 5. Students' Perception towards Teachers' General Motivation

No.	Statements	Always	Frequently	Seldom	Never
	During online class (2021-2022), my English teacher …				
1	showed me that English mastery would be useful for my future.	70%	30%	-	-
2	showed me that he/she cares about my progress in learning English.	50%	43%	7%	-

Based on table 5 above, it shows the information that students have different perceptions of teachers' general motivational teaching strategies, but not a significant difference. The majority of the students perceived that their teachers always showed that English would be very useful for their future. In strategy number 2, the table shows that half of the students perceived that their learning progress was noticed and cared for by the teachers. Only a small number of students seldom received that treatment. According to some students interviewed, they said:

> 'English teacher in MAN IC usually said "English has many benefits, especially when you are going to continue to a favourable university. Plus, English is one of the compulsory subjects in the UTBK literate test to enrol university'. (S1)
> '… usually asked, "why I got a different score from other students. What you did not understand". And we usually got special treatment. That is it'. (S1)

Furthermore, students' responses towards the teachers' strategies in motivating their low-achieving learners during class sessions or synchronous meetings seem varied. The result of this part is presented in the following table 6.

Table 6. Students' perception towards teachers' strategies during class session

No.	Statements	Always	Frequently	Seldom	Never
	During online class (2021-2022), my English teacher …				
1	started the class by exploring and making use of our prior knowledge to introduce me with the new topic.	50%	40%	10%	-
2	presented various auditory and visual teaching aids to facilitate my understanding and practices.	27%	60%	13%	-
3	explained topics clearly and specifically.	56%	37%	7%	-
4	clarified topics or ideas that I find hard to understand.	53%	40%	7%	-
5	regularly monitored my activities.	43%	47%	10%	-
6	helped me understand particular complex aspects of English.	47%	40%	13%	-
7	provided me rewards for active participation during online classroom activities in the form of gifts or additional scores.	27%	53%	17%	3%

As can be seen in table 6 above, it shows that half of the students perceived that their teachers started the class by brainstorming to connect and engage students' prior knowledge of the new topic. The majority of students also claimed that their teachers frequently presented various auditory and visual teaching aids during their online class period. In synchronous meetings, students mostly affirmed that their teachers explained topics clearly and specifically, and clarified difficult materials in their students' activities. A greater number of students also asserted that their teachers frequently monitored their activities during synchronous meetings. There is only a small number of students who seldom got their teachers' help if they found particular complex aspects of English. The majority of students claimed that they could get special rewards for active participation during online classroom activities in the form of gifts or additional scores. Some of the students said:

> '… showed us videos, kind of motivation video'. (S3)
> '… at the end of the class meeting he offered us "If you do not understand, you may chat with me personally after class". (S7)
> 'He usually gave us additional scores for active participation. My friends liked hearing that offer'. (S21)

In asynchronous activities, the researcher also specifically tried to find out the students' perception towards teachers' considerable strategies in motivating low-achieving learners. The researcher offered five statements in this part. The details of students' responses can be seen more detailed in the following table.

Table 7. Students' perception towards teachers' strategies after class session

No.	Statements	Always	Frequently	Seldom	Never
	During online class (2021-2022), my English teacher …				
1	kept my parents regularly informed about my progress through text or call.	-	23%	54%	23%
2	asked for my parent's assistance in completing take-home tasks.	7%	23%	40%	30%
3	gave me enough time for additional practices.	54%	43%	7%	-
4	answered my questions after the class individually.	40%	50%	7%	3%
5	provided additional homework based on my own weaknesses.	17%	43%	33%	7%

From table 7, the researchers found that more than half of students asserted that their teachers hardly ever informed or called their parents about their progress. Their teachers rarely involved students' parents in handling students with low achievements. Nine students even affirmed that their teacher never asked for their parents' assistance in completing take-home tasks. After class sessions, the majority of students perceived that they had more opportunities to practice at their home. A great number of students also got replied individually whenever they had some questions to ask. Their personal messages were positively answered by their teachers. In addition, it was found that almost half of the students were given additional homework based on their weaknesses. It was set to certain students so that they were able to improve their performance. According to some students interviewed, they said:

'… usually asked us from our own friends. They called parents just because when we seldom attended the class session or Zoom meetings'. (S1)
'… texted him in the morning, and got answered in the afternoon. I guessed my teacher was quite busy'. (S18)
'…every teacher in all subjects gave us additional materials when we did not achieve the minimum score of those lessons. (S1)

In the last part of the questionnaires, the researchers continued asking students' perceptions towards teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners that involve their classmates. These strategies could be done in synchronous and asynchronous activities. This part is broken down into three questions. The result of these responses can be specifically seen in the following table.

Table 8. Students' perception towards teachers' strategies that involves students' peers

No.	Statements	Always	Frequently	Seldom	Never
	During online class (2021-2022), my English teacher …				
1	encouraged peer teaching while or after class.	20%	53%	20%	7%
2	regularly used small-group tasks where I can socialize with my friends.	20%	56%	17%	7%
3	invited high-achiever students to share their English learning experiences.	27%	53%	20%	-

Based on table 8, it can be seen that students were accustomed to having group discussions during online classes. It was done so that students could collaborate and cooperate with their own friends. It was also found that the majority of students claimed that their teachers liked to invite the most outstanding students to share their experiences in their classrooms. Regarding this case, some interviewed students shared their perceptions.

'It was often done. We tended to easily understand when being taught by our own friends'. (S21)
'He selected us randomly'. (S2, S3, S7, & S18)

DISCUSSION

This section discussed the EFL teachers' strategies of their practices in motivating low-achieving learners during online classes. The discussion of findings is broken down into two discussions; (1) EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners in online classes, and (2) students' perception towards EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners in online classes.

Teachers' Strategies

The result of the study confirmed that both strategies offered general motivation, *show students that English mastery will be useful for their future* and *show students that I care about their progress in learning English* are highly and positively selected by the EFL teachers to motivate low-achieving learners. This result was not really surprising, because these strategies cannot be separated from the teacher's profile, and these two general motivational teaching strategies are even definitely needed both in online and offline classes. This finding is also in accordance with Wirentake's research (2015), stating that a teacher's compassion for the students is one of the important motivational teaching strategies. So, what we can summarize from these

findings is showing students about the importance of English, and caring for the student's learning progress are assumed as essential strategies to motivate low-achieving learners in an online class.

The next result of the study is regarding the teachers' strategies for motivating low-achieving learners during class sessions or synchronous meetings. It was found that teachers consistently give their best teaching performance in synchronous meetings as they believe that low-achieving learners could be possibly motivated in this face-to-face meeting. It was confirmed that the majority of teachers actively monitor students' activities and clarify difficult topics or ideas during the synchronous meeting. These two strategies are assumed as crucial strategies followed by strategies 5, 8, 3, 4, and 9. What has been stated by the teachers above actually has been noticed by Dornyei (2001), who stated that taking the students' learning very seriously and creating a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom are crucial strategies that can help students improve their performance, especially for low-achieving learners.

Unlike a synchronous meeting, EFL teachers could not give a lot of effort to help students in asynchronous meetings except by giving students enough time for additional practice and answering students' questions after the class individually which were mostly voted by teachers among other motivational teaching strategies. EFL teachers gave students additional time to practice at their homes at their own pace. EFL teachers also regularly replied to students' personal texts or WhatsApp groups after class sessions regarding assignments or other instruction students need to know more clearly. These two strategies seem the most possible strategies that could be applied by EFL teachers to motivate low-achieving learners during online classes. Other strategies were only done by a small number of teachers where the result shows that the majority of EFL teachers barely informed or called students' parents, and rarely involved students' parents in handling students with low achievements. Asking for parents' assistance in completing take-home tasks also could not be expected by EFL teachers. Most EFL teachers assumed that keeping students' parents informed was not their capacity so they gave it to homeroom teachers, counselling teachers, and *guru asuh*.

In accordance with Dornyei's theory (2001), creating a good relationship with students' parents seems a good strategy stating that most parents care about their children's progress and will positively respond to the teachers. EFL teachers find it hard to develop a collaborative relationship with students' parents by keeping them regularly informed about their children's progress and asking for their assistance in completing take-home tasks, especially in online class periods that make it much more complicated. EFL teachers basically realize that the presence of parents can play a great passive role for students but they should be realistic that they cannot reach them due to many considerations. It is a good strategy, but it is not easy to apply.

From the interview, the researcher could get additional information stating that *MAN Insan Cendekia* have *guru asuh* and *Klinik* program. *Guru asuh* refers to certain teachers who behave as academic supervisors and substitutions of their parents at school. Low-achieving learners' academic progress was regularly reported and handled by *guru asuh*. While *Klinik* program is a superior program that provides additional classes aiming to improve students' performance and boost their insufficient scores which are usually held in the afternoon right after school hours or at the weekend. EFL teachers could provide additional assignments and practices during running this program.

The last point is a discussion about teachers' motivational teaching strategies that involve students' peers. The majority of EFL teachers believe that putting students into a collaborative and cooperative environment becomes an alternative way to enhance low-achieving learners' eagerness to participate and can improve their achievement. Even though EFL teachers did not select these strategies as their main preference in motivating low-achieving learners, at least they still could have the opportunity to apply these strategies in their online classes. It is according to Wlodkowski's (2017) statement saying that collaborative and cooperative learning can improve online learners' quality of learning through activities in which they can share their experience, their knowledge, and construct new knowledge together. EFL teachers perceived that designing collaborative learning can help low-achieving learners eliminate feelings of isolation during online classes. When their relationships with their peers are already forged, their eagerness of studying automatically goes up which leads to improvement in their own achievement. From the interview, the researcher also found that EFL teachers tend to mix the group members to avoid comparison among students, but on some certain topics, they confessed that they need to settle the proportion of high and low achievers in the hope the learning process goes smoothly as they expect.

Students' Perception

As shown by the table in the previous explanation, low-achieving learners agreed that their EFL teachers' general motivational teaching strategies were successfully applied in their online classes. In an interview, they said that EFL teachers often told them facts or stories related to the importance of English during online classes. They could get their teachers' attention when they did not get the minimum score by calling or texting by asking them why they had low achievement. It was also found that EFL teachers usually listed and asked for their incomplete assignments to be completed. It is according to Wlodkowski's (2017) statement saying that teachers should emphasize what is being learned and its relationship to the learners' personal lives and current situations. It means that students need to know the main goal of what they are learning, that is the importance of English for their future life. So, what we can summarize from these findings is students asserted that EFL teachers' general motivational teaching strategies in an online class were positively implemented.

Furthermore, findings in synchronous meetings show that all EFL teachers' strategies offered in motivating low-achieving learners were mostly utilized in students' online classes. Students added that all their EFL teachers provided them with ice breakings to start the class by showing various videos and presenting numerous auditory and visual teaching materials during

online classes that make them more comfortable in learning English. Low-achieving learners confirmed that their EFL teachers clearly explained topics, clarified difficult materials, and frequently monitored their activities during synchronous meetings. Low-achieving learners were also offered some rewards in the form of additional scores if they want to express and participate more in their online classes.

What has been stated by the students above was actually has been discussed by Wirentake (2015), in which he found that start the class with students' prior knowledge strategy was one of the most important strategies considered by students. Other strategies are also successfully implemented in students' online classes. The sequence of foremost strategies implemented based on students' perceptions is strategies 5 and 6, followed by strategies 3, 7, 8, 4, and 9. So, we can summarize that low-achieving learners stated that EFL teachers did a lot of effort to motivate them in synchronous meetings. All strategies offered by the researcher were fully implemented by EFL teachers, even though the strategies offered were applied at different frequencies.

The next discussion is students' perception towards EFL teachers' strategies in asynchronous meetings. The majority of low-achieving learners claimed that EFL teachers rarely or even never informed their parents about their progress, and asked for their parents' assistance in completing certain assignments at home; through text or call. Students added that their EFL teachers reach them through their friends or homeroom teacher, counselling teacher, and *guru asuh*. What EFL teachers could do to motivate low-achieving learners in asynchronous meetings was give enough time for additional practice, answer students' personal questions after class, and provide additional classes and assignments out of the regular online class.

In line with Wlodkowski's (2017) statement stating that one of the foremost motivational strategies is providing an opportunity for multidimensional sharing. EFL teachers should provide the opportunity for learners to find their needs including asking for unclear instruction on how to carry certain assignments through texting while or after class. So, what the researcher can infer from the findings of the asynchronous meeting section is that low-achieving learners get motivated by being given additional time, being answered, and being provided additional classes, not by their parents' assistance.

The closing part of the discussion is about students' perception of EFL teachers' strategies in motivating low-achieving learners that involve their own peers or classmates. It shows that low-achieving learners were successfully accustomed to have small group discussions during online classes in the hope they could grow better and achieve better progress. Among the three strategies, inviting high-achiever students to share their English learning experiences strategy was more highly voted by the low-achieving learners. Dornyei (2001) believes that presenting peer role models is one of the foremost strategies that promote the learners' language-related values. EFL teachers encourage high achievers to share positive experiences in class and associate their low-achieving learners with peers who are passionate about the English subject (e.g., in groups or project work). In short, low-achieving learners observed that EFL teachers treated them by encouraging peer teaching and group discussion.

Looking at this whole point of discussion, the researcher found that there were no significant different perceptions between EFL teachers and students regarding the application of motivational teaching strategies. Among the ten foremost strategies applied, they only had different opinions on one strategy where EFL claimed that *offering rewards for participating in activities strategy* was one of the ten foremost strategies applied, but low-achieving learners agreed that it was not that often. Low-achieving learners even chose to *answer students' questions after the class strategy* was applied more often than *offering rewards for participating in activities strategy* in their online class.

The different perceptions of the teachers and low-achieving learners might be caused by their background knowledge about the low-achieving learners' needs. Teachers basically know about anything related to the problems of the teaching-learning process including the way of motivating low-achieving learners in online classes; what activities and strategies can be possibly applied, and what cannot be. To some extent, teachers did not specifically show students that they were motivating low-achieving learners due to some consideration. On the contrary, the low-achieving learners only received what their teachers gave or asked them to do in the learning process. To this point, teachers perceived and gave their opinions about all strategies offered by the researcher based on what they already implemented in a neutral way, yet the students gave their perceptions based on their experiences.

Aside from existing of the foremost motivational teaching strategies considered by EFL teachers and students, there were also other strategies that were considered least applied by EFL teachers and low-achieving learners. The findings also showed that there were no significant differences in their perception between EFL teachers and low-achieving learners. Surprisingly, both EFL teachers and low-achieving learners had the same exact opinion regarding the last four of the seven least motivational teaching strategies; (14) encourage peer teaching while or after class; (15) provide additional homework based on student's weakness; (16) ask for parent's assistance in completing tasks at home; (17) keep parents regularly informed about their children's progress.

CONCLUSIONS

The result of the study had shown that low-achieving learners can be motivated by various motivational teaching strategies to boost their performance and achievement. EFL teachers can motivate low-achieving learners by monitoring their activities at regular times, showing them the importance of English, clarifying topics, caring about their learning progress, and explaining topics clearly and specifically.

Increasing low-achieving learners' performance in online classes is not an easy job for EFL teachers due to the limitation of distance and time. When students had low achievement during the online learning process, EFL teachers should have a lot of energy to regularly monitor their activities in synchronous meetings where it is the most possible activity to do and also keep their patience in showing the importance of English to them either in synchronous and asynchronous meetings. Aside from applying motivational teaching strategies, the EFL teachers also should collaborate with all elements; including homeroom teachers, counselling teachers, and *guru asuh*. The involvement of parents also plays a significant role to overcome low-achieving learners' problems, but unfortunately, EFL teachers still get trapped in the culture-bound where they could not get out of their comfort zone in motivating low-achieving learners. EFL teachers might feel reluctant or get overwhelmed with the complicated administration at their schools.

Remaining to all points of the conclusion and limitation of this study, the researchers would like to give several suggestions for several parties such as English teachers, the students, and further researchers. For English teachers, the researchers suggest that the teachers consider implementing those motivational teaching strategies when they utilize online classes in order to keep low-achieving learners motivated to improve their performances. EFL teacher needs to keep showing the importance of English and showing compassion to the learners. Even more so, EFL teachers also need to try to go beyond their comfort zone and try to practice other types of motivational teaching strategies such as involving and keeping students' parents informed about their children's learning progress.

For the students, the researcher suggests that the students be more motivated in online class settings. It should be noticed that no magical ways can motivate you, self-motivation can do better. You need to keep in your mind that by having online classes you can create your own comfort at your own pace, and you also need to realize that cooperation with the EFL teachers is essentially needed in order to achieve your ultimate goals.

The last suggestion is for further research. Since this online class research was conducted in offline settings, the findings can be still superficial. The researcher obtained EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of online class scope when they already ran face-to-face teaching and learning processes. The researcher should recall memories of EFL teachers and students to find out valid data both in the questionnaire and interview. Thus, the researcher suggests further researchers who want to conduct a study in the similar research field as the researcher did, they need to obtain the more accurate result by collecting data from schools or institutions that are running full online classes. Further researchers may consider individual differences types such as gender, geographical background, teaching experiences, and academic qualification of the respondents. Further researchers may also consider looking at the students' achievement in English before and after the implementation of the teachers' strategies to motivate low-achieving learners to prove the significance of the motivational teaching strategies applied.

REFERENCES

Alghamdi, Fatimah M. A., & Ozma Siddiqui. (2016). Supporting Low-Achieving EFL Learners: Expectations, Procedure and Significance of Remedial Sessions at a Saudi University. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 4*(12), 204–212. doi: 10.11114/jets.v4i12.2028.

Amiti, Flora. (2020). Synchronous and Asynchronous E-Learning. *European Journal of Open Education and E-learning Studies*, *5*(2). 1DOI: 10.46827/ejoe.v5i2.3313

Apud. (2008). Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan MAN Insan Cendekia (Analisis terhadap Pengelolaan Mutu Program Akademik di MAN Insan Cendekia Serpong- Tangerang Selatan. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan, 4*(2), 171-190.

Berg, Bruce L., & Howard Lune. (2017). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Ninth edition. Boston: Pearson.

Blackburn R, Barbara. (2016). *Motivating Struggling Learners 10 Ways to Build Student Success*. Routledge 711 Third Avenue, New York.

Brown, H. Douglas. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. 5th ed. White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman.

Caroline Sharp et al. (2020). *Responses to Covid-19; The challenges facing schools and pupils in September 2020*. National foundation for educational research.

Chakrabarty, Amal Kumar. (2014). *Low Achievers at Elementary Stages of Efl Learning: The Problems and* Possible Way-Outs. Department of Education Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University. India.

Chan, Roy Y et al., (2022). *Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education during COVID-19*. 605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158.

Cheng, Hsing-Fu, and Zoltán Dörnyei. (2007). The Use of Motivational Strategies in Language Instruction: The Case of EFL Teaching in Taiwan. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching 1*(1), 153–174. doi: 10.2167/illt048.0.

Colman, Andrew M. (2003). *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*. Oxford University Press

Dörnyei, Zoltán. (2001). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ekiz, S. & Kulmetov, Z. (2016). The Factors Affecting Learners' Motivation in English Language Education. *Journal of Foreign Language Education and Technology, 1*(1).

Ellis, Rod. (2015). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP, United Kingdom

Eno, Mohamed A. (2019). Impact of Remedial Teaching on ESL/EFL Low Achievers: An Arabian Gulf Experience. *International Journal of English Research, 5*(2), 58-64.

Floyd J. Fowler, Jr. (2014). *Survey Research Methods Fifth Edition*. Boston. University of Massachusetts Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.

Gerring, Jhon. (2017). *Case Study Research; Principles and Practices Second Edition*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom.

Hoffman, Bobby. (2015). *Motivation for Learning and Performance*. Boston: Elsevier Academic Press.

Isaac Kwakye, & Emma Kibort-Crocker. (2020). *Facing Learning Disruption: Examining the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on K-12 Students.* Washington Student Achievement Council

Kassing, Rachmania Bachtiar. (2011). *Perceptions of Motivational Teaching Strategies in an EFL Classroom: The Case of a Class in a Private University in Indonesia*. A published thesis: Victoria University of Wellington.

Kumar, Ranjit. (2019). *Research Methodology a step-by-step guide for beginners fifth edition*. SAGE Publication Ltd. New Delhi

Kun Li. (2017). *Motivational Regulation in Foreign Language Learning*. Shanghai Normal University Shanghai, China.

Lehr, Judy Brown & Harris, Hazel Wiggin. (1988). *At-risk, low-achieving students in the classroom*. National Education Association. Washington, D.C.

Mary, Ellen Munoz. (2011). *English as a second language; Grammar Intermediate & Advanced*. Research & Education Association 61 Ethel Road West Piscataway, New Jersey.

Mulyono & Wekke, Ismail Suardi. (2018). *Strategi Pembelajaran di Abad Digital*. Penerbit Gawe Buku. Yogyakarta.

Palloff, Rena M., & Keith Pratt. (2005). *Collaborating Online: Learning Together in Community*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Perveen, A. (2016). *Synchronous and Asynchronous E-Language Learning: A Case Study of Virtual University of Pakistan*. *Open Praxis, 8*(1), 21. doi: 10.5944/openpraxis.8.1.212.

Pokropek, A., Costa, P., Flisi, S., & Biagi. (2018). *Low achievers, teaching practices and learning environment*. Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Commission's science and knowledge service. Luxembourg.

Reza, M. & Hussein. (2013). *The Role of EFL Teachers in Increasing High School Students' Motivation in Classroom*. *International Journal of Education and Research*,*1*(10)

Saepudin, J. (2018). *Islamic High School (Madrasah Aliyah) development (a case study of MAN insan cendekia serpong)*. Jakarta: Balai Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama.

Sugiyono. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Penerbit Alfabeta

Tsui-Chun Hu, & Ying-Ju Hsu. 2020. *Effects of a Remedial Program on Beginner-Level, Low-Achieving EFL Learners*. *Bulletin of Educational Psychology, 51*(4), 687—711.

Vanauker, Kelly Anne. (2003). *Barriers to low achievers' success in the elementary classroom as perceived by teachers: a qualitative study.* Unpublished dissertation

Wirentake. (2015). *Students' perception of motivational strategies in English as foreign language (EFL) classroom*. Unpublished thesis.

Wlodkowsk, Raymond J, & Ginsberg, Margery B. (2017). *Enhancing adult motivation to learn a comprehensive guide for teaching all adults.* Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data. San Francisco.